THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): During the visit of External Affairs Minister. Shri K. Natwar Singh to Pakistan from February 15 to 17, 2005, agreement was reached on starting a bus service between Amritsar and Lahore, including to religious places such as Nankana Sahib. In the Joint Statement released during the visit of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to India from April 16-18, 2005, both President Musharraf and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh stated that they looked forward to the early start of the bus service between Amritsar and Lahore and to religious places, such as Nankana Sahib.

The bus service will be operationalised after working out technical details between the two countries. The technical level talks with Pakistan are likely to be held in the second week of May 2005.

India's stand on PoK

4541. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made its stand clear to Government of Pakistan about the Indian stand in relation to PoK and the northern areas now that the bus service has started between the two sides of Kashmir;

(b) if so, the details of such talks; and

(c) if not the reasons for which such discussion was not held between the two Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) the Government of India's principled and consistent position on the issue of Jammu & Kashmir is that the entire State of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. A part of the territory of the State is under the forcible occupation of Pakistan. This position has been reaffirmed by the Resolution on Jammu & Kashmir adopted by the Parliament of India on 22 February, 1994. India is committed under the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, to resolve all issues with Pakistan peacefully through bilateral discussions.